

Name: _____ Period: _____ Date: _____

Executive Branch Reading Comprehension

Directions: Read the following and answer the following questions

What is the Executive Branch?

In the U.S. government, the executive branch acts like a giant engine, turning ideas (bills) into actions (laws). It's in charge of making sure the laws created by Congress are put into effect. But here's the catch: there's a system called **checks and balances** that keeps things fair. This system makes sure no branch, including the executive branch, gets too powerful and takes over. Checks and balances mean that each branch of government keeps an eye on the others to make sure they're not doing anything they shouldn't be. It's like having referees in a game to make sure everyone plays by the rules.

Head of the Executive Branch

The President is the top leader of the executive branch, which makes laws happen. He can be in charge for up to two four-year terms. President Franklin D. Roosevelt served more than that, but then Congress made a rule called the **22nd Amendment** to the **Constitution**. This amendment says Presidents can only serve two terms max. The Constitution is like the big rulebook for our country, where all the important rules and principles are written down.

As the executive head, the President signs legislation into law, approved by Congress. He also holds the power to veto bills he disagrees with, although Congress can override this with a majority vote. Additionally, the President serves as the top commander of the military and fosters diplomatic relations with other nations, representing the United States on the global stage.

Example of Executive Branch Powers

Executive branch examples of power include the authority held by the President, the Vice President, and the President's cabinet. Some of these executive branch examples of power include the ability to appoint individuals to certain governmental posts, and the authority to appoint federal judges to the **U.S. Supreme Court**.

Another example of power within the executive branch is the ability to grant a pardon, which means forgiving someone for a crime they committed. This authority applies only to federal crimes. It's important to note that the President doesn't have the power to pardon someone for a crime they committed at the state level.

Checks and Balances

The system of checks and balances ensures that no branch of government becomes too powerful. The way checks and balances work entails the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government all sharing governmental power.

For instance, Congress, by way of the system of checks and balances, controls the money that funds any actions the executive branch wants to take. So, if Congress refuses to fund an action, the executive branch cannot execute it.

The President also has the power to **veto** a bill, keeping it from becoming law. However, Congress has the power to override the President's veto with a supermajority vote. This is an example of executive branch control kept in check by the system of checks and balances.

Duties of the Executive Branch

The executive branch has several important duties beyond enforcing the country's laws. One crucial responsibility is to lead and manage the various government departments and agencies, ensuring they operate effectively and efficiently. This includes overseeing federal programs related to areas such as healthcare, education, transportation, and environmental protection.

The executive branch also plays a key role in shaping national policies and priorities. The President and their administration work closely with Congress to propose and advocate for new laws and initiatives that address pressing issues facing the nation. They also work on developing and implementing strategies to promote economic growth, national security, and social welfare.

Finally, the President represents the United States on the world stage. The President conducts diplomatic relations with foreign governments, negotiates treaties and trade agreements, and addresses international crises and conflicts. Through diplomacy and foreign policy initiatives, the executive branch seeks to advance America's interests and values while fostering cooperation and stability among nations.

Executive Branch Questions

Matching

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| _____ | 1. 22 nd Amendment | a. To refuse to admit or approve |
| _____ | 2. Checks and balances | b. A system to prevent any one branch from exerting too much power |
| _____ | 3. Veto | c. To remit the penalty of an offense |
| _____ | 4. Pardon | d. An amendment that limits presidential terms |
| _____ | 5. U.S. Supreme Court | e. The highest court in the US |
| _____ | 6. Constitution | f. Division of government into the executive, judicial, and legislative branches |
| _____ | 7. Branches of government | g. The system of principles in which a nation is governed |

Multiple Choice

- _____ 8. Who acts as the President over the Senate and casts the deciding vote in the event of a tie?
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| a. President of the United States | b. Senate pro Tempore |
| c. Vice President of the United States | d. Senate Majority Leader |
- _____ 9. Who was the only president who served for more than 2 terms?
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|--------------------------|--------------------|
| a. Franklin D. Roosevelt | b. Abraham Lincoln |
| c. George Washington | d. Ronald Reagan |
- _____ 10. Which of the following can the United States President NOT do?
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| a. Nominate justices to the Supreme Court. | b. Command and oversee the US Military. |
| c. Pardoning individuals for state crimes. | d. He or she can do all the above. |
- _____ 11. What is the main duty of the executive branch?
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|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Making laws happen. | b. Enforcing the country's laws. |
| c. Interpreting the Constitution | d. Overseeing state governments. |
- _____ 12. What distinguishes the authority of the President to grant pardons from other executive powers?
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| a. It applies only to federal crimes | b. It can be overridden by Congress |
| c. It must be approved by the Supreme Court | d. It is not subject to the system of checks and balances |

